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MAXFIELD DOMINATES AT CHURCHILL AGAIN, WINS GRADE I, \$750,000 CLARK

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Friday, Nov. 26, 2021) – Multiple graded stakes winner **Maxfield**, one of the top older horses in North America, capped his racing career in style Friday at Churchill Downs as the 4-year-old colt swept past favorite **Midnight Bourbon** at the top of the stretch and turned back a late bid from **Happy Saver** to win the 147th running of the \$750,000 Clark presented by Norton Healthcare (Grade I) by a half-length.

The lofty \$450,910 first prize, thanks of a record-setting purse, lifted the dark bay or brown colt's earnings to multi-millionaire status: \$2,001,812 from a record of 8-2-1 in 11 starts. He is a perfect 5-for-5 beneath the historic Twin Spires at Churchill Downs.

Owned and bred by **Godolphin**, Maxfield clocked 1 1/8 miles on a track rated "good" in 1:49.06 under jockey **Jose Ortiz**, who rode the winner for trainer **Brendan Walsh**. This was the first Clark win for each of the connections.

"I feel just delighted he got the job done like that today," Walsh said. "It's a very prestigious race and it's very nice he could win it and go into his stud career like that."

Breaking from the far outside post position in the field of eight 3-year-olds and up, Maxfield relaxed in the clear off the early pace set by slight 6-5 favorite Midnight Bourbon, the Preakness (GI), Travers (GI) and Pennsylvania Derby (GI) runner-up who dictated terms through the first quarter mile in :23.83 and a half-mile in :48.00. **Chess Chief**, the longest shot at 101-1, chased from the inside in third and **Happy Saver**, the winner of the Jockey Club Gold Cup (GI) in 2020 and runner-up this year, was content to track from fourth at odds of 12-1.

Leaving the far turn after six furlongs in 1:11.70, Maxfield drew even from the outside of 3-year-old Midnight Bourbon with minimal urging from Ortiz. The two matched strides at the top of the stretch for about a furlong before Maxfield drew clear of that rival in deep stretch. Happy Saver continued his steady run from the outside to cut into the final margin but was second best to the winner.

"He put me in the race today when he broke from the gate," Ortiz said. "I could tell Happy Saver would be coming around the far turn and Maxfield felt him come alongside as well. He was able to dig down and really fight hard today. Hats off to Brendan and his team who have done an amazing job with him throughout his career. I'm very happy he gets to go out this way."

Maxfield, at odds of 6-5, rewarded his backers with mutuels of \$4.40, \$3 and \$2.20. Happy Saver, with **Tyler Gaffalione** up, returned \$7.20 and \$3.60. **Midnight Bourbon**, under **Joel Rosario**, was another three lengths back in third and paid \$2.60 to show.

"He ran a huge race," Gaffalione said of Happy Saver. "Hats off to Maxfield who was best today and ran great. I tried to get him into the race a little earlier just with the way the track has been playing. He ran a great race in defeat."

Rosario offered no excuse for Midnight Bourbon's defeat. "I got a really easy lead up the backside and he was traveling well," Rosario said. "(Maxfield and Happy Saver) were just best tonight."

Militarist finished fourth and was followed by **King Fury**, **Night Ops**, **Dr Post** and Chess Chief.

This was the seventh career stakes victory for Maxfield and second Grade I. At 2, he won the \$500,000 Breeders' Futurity (GI) at Keeneland by 5 ½ lengths.

He entered the race off a second-place finish, 1 ½ lengths behind **Art Collector**, in the \$500,000 Woodward (GI) at Belmont Park 55 days ago on Oct. 2.

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Following his Breeders' Futurity win at age 2, Maxfield was the third choice on the morning line for the \$2 million Breeders' Cup Juvenile (GI) in 2019 but was scratched from the race with a minor injury.

Maxfield returned in May 2020 and posted a one-length win the \$150,000 Matt Winn (GIII) at Churchill Downs. He appeared to be a top contender for the Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (GI) when it was delayed until September because of the COVID-19 pandemic but he was, again, forced to the sidelines with another setback.

Maxfield resumed racing action last December and won the \$75,000 Tenacious at Fair Grounds, which was an ideal steppingstone to what would be a sensational 4-year-old campaign in 2021. This year, he won four of seven starts – the \$200,000 Mineshaft (GIII) at Fair Grounds in February; the \$400,000 Alysheba presented by Sentinet Jet (GII) on the Kentucky Oaks undercard in late April; the \$600,000 Stephen Foster (GII) in June; and Friday's Clark – with runner-up efforts in the \$1 million Whitney (GI) at Saratoga in August and The Woodward and a third in the \$400,000 Santa Anita Handicap (GI) in March.

Maxfield is the first horse to sweep Churchill Downs' Alysheba, Stephen Foster and Clark in a calendar year. For that matter, he's also the first horse to win both the Stephen Foster and Clark in the same year.

Next up for Maxfield is stud duty at **Darley at Jonabell Farm** where he will stand for \$40,000. Maxfield is son of 2007 Kentucky Derby winner Street Sense out of the Bernardini mare Velvety and was bred in Kentucky by his owners.

"He's an unbelievable horse," Walsh said. "I can't say enough about him. He's been through a lot the last two years. Today, he had to fight hard to get the job done and he ran great to hold off Happy Saver. It's hard to find another horse like him. It was fantastic everything came together. It's a fantastic way to cap his career."

The Clark, named for Churchill Downs founder **Col. M. Lewis Clark**, was run for the first time in 1875 during the first racing meet at Churchill Downs, which was then known as the Louisville Jockey Club. Like the Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (GI) and Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI), the Clark has been renewed annually without interruption since its first running.

Racing at Churchill Downs continues Saturday with a 12-race program that begins at 1 p.m. (all times Eastern). The 95th running of the \$400,000 Kentucky Jockey Club (GII) – a "Prep Season" race on the Road to the Kentucky Derby – and the 78th running of the \$400,000 Golden Rod (GII) for fillies are the headliners on the penultimate day of Churchill Downs' 21-date Fall Meet. Billed as "Stars of Tomorrow II," each of the 12 races is exclusively for 2-year-olds that may have aspirations of trail-blazing their way to next spring's Kentucky Derby and Kentucky Oaks.

There's a jackpot carryover of \$210,134 on the 20-cent minimum Derby City 6, which covers Races 7-12 starting at 3:57 p.m. If the jackpot is not hit by a single winning combination on Saturday, there will be a mandatory payout on Sunday's 12-race finale. Also, there is a \$4,971 carryover in the \$1 Super Hi 5, which is offered on the final race of the day.

CLARK QUOTES

Jose Ortiz, jockey of MAXFIELD (winner): "He put me in the race today when he broke from the gate. I could tell Happy Saver would be coming around the far turn and Maxfield felt him come alongside as well. He was able to dig down and really fight hard today. Hats off to Brendan and his team who have done an amazing job with him throughout his career. I'm very happy he gets to go out this way."

Brendan Walsh, trainer of MAXFIELD (winner): "I feel just delighted he got the job done like that today. It's a very prestigious race and it's very nice he could win it and go into his stud career like that. He's an unbelievable horse. I can't say enough about him. He's been through a lot the last two years. Today, he had to fight hard to get the job done and he ran great to hold off Happy Saver. It's hard to find another horse like him. It was fantastic everything came together. It's a fantastic way to cap his career."

Tyler Gaffalione, jockey of HAPPY SAVER (runner-up): "He ran a huge race. Hats off to Maxfield who was best today and ran great. I tried to get him into the race a little earlier just with the way the track has been playing. He ran a great race in defeat."

Joel Rosario, jockey of MIDNIGHT BOURBON (third): "I got a really easy lead up the backside and he was traveling well. (Maxfield and Happy Saver) were just best tonight."

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